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## SUCCESS STORY

# Transforming Madrasa Education in India

**USAID provides improved educational opportunities to more than 30,000 Muslim children in remote areas of North India**

Mohammad Sarfaraz is a teacher at a Madrasa, a Muslim religious school, in a remote village of North India. For years, he relied on a standard lecture-style teaching method but found it frustrating that his students often seemed unable to absorb simple lessons. Exasperated, Sarfaraz said he “knew there was a problem but didn’t know it had to do with me!”



Photo: Amy Wielkoszewski/ USAID

Fortunately, USAID’s Minority Education for Growth and Advancement – Skills for Youth (MEGA- SKY) program stepped in to provide Sarfaraz with training in classroom management and more modern, student-centered learning techniques. By working with teachers, community groups, and volunteers, MEGA-SKY provides over 30,000 disadvantaged students, particularly those in minority communities, with educational opportunities that will better prepare them to enter India’s formal education system.

Along with 360 other principals and teachers from four Indian states, Sarfaraz learned how to use newer teaching materials, prepare lesson plans, better communicate with children, effectively manage his classroom, monitor performance, and form better community-school relationships. “There has been a tremendous change since the training. Now when I enter the classroom, I am more prepared and confident. My student’s grades have improved immensely. They are more attentive in the class. Their beaming faces tell me all!” he said.

USAID then went on to work with the Madrasa administration to help foster a more child-centered learning environment school-wide. Securing the active participation of community leaders was critical to helping parents and other community members embrace this new approach to education. The community is now completely on board and making both cash and in-kind contributions to sustain their Madrasa, which has a student population of over 500. The Madrasa is now registered with the State Madrasa Board and is receiving government funds.

Embracing this modern approach to education, the students now want a computer lab to help prepare them for the 21<sup>st</sup> century employment market. The community has promised them support. “USAID has helped us,” said a village elder, “and now it is up to us to help our community.”

**Young girls in the Mangalpur Madrasa in Uttar Pradesh, India learning about “My Family” in English**